

[Mr. Obe Adams]

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Life history

FOLKLORE-WHITE PIONEER,

Miss Effie Cowan, P.W.

McLennan County, Texas,

District 8. 2250

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REFERENCE.

"Interview with Mr Obe Adams, Mart, Texas.

"I was born in 1857 in Grimes County. My parents came to Texas in 1836 and came with some of Sterling Robertson's colony. [??] They settled on the lower Blue Ridge, a settlement near Reagan, Texas. I was about 13 year year's of age when the Houston and Texas Central railroad came through the community of what is now the town of Reagan, Texas.

"We had a little school and church house combined ou out on the Ridge, and it was called the Shady Grove school and church. I helped to build this building. Some of the members were my father, I.N.and Bad Crouch, and the Powers family, others I will mention in the

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history of the church. I remember that Rev. Kinnard was a Primitive Baptist preacher and preached in the homes.

"I was married in 1875, to Emmiline Crouch. To us was born three children. Mary, Tom, and Fannie. The two girls are married and still living, our son, Tom lived to marry and had a family is now deceased. My wife died in January of 1883, and in 1894 I married Miss Lillie Miles of Reagan. She was a daughter of Benjamin Miles and Sarah Jane Crouch Miles. My wife, is still living with me and [?] to this marriage was born to us , ten children. Six of whom lived to be grown, the others dying in childhood. The ones who lived to be grown are Mrs Mike Matthews, (Bessie)deceased). Mrs Bonnie Hudgins of Little Rock Arkansas. Frank, deceased, Mrs Eracie Woodward Corsicana Texas. Mrs Vera Rutherford, Mart, and Loraine, Mart. C12- 2/11/41 - Texas 2 "My present wife is a relative of the Marlin family through the Crouch family. They came with the Sterling Robertson colony and one of the ancestors on the Crouch side of the family was in the fight between the white men and the Indians in the battle which took place ten days after the Morgan -Marlin massacre, at what is called Morgans Point, and where still stands the cabin which one of the Morgans lived. (This cabin is owned by the Misses Gill of Mart, who are grand-daughters of Mr Oakes, the only one to which the deed to the land has been given since the Mexican government deeded it to the Morgan family about the year 1836.)

"The coming of the Houston and Texas Central railroad through the country from Bremond to Waco, caused some of the families on the Ridge to move into the towns to be nearer the better schools and churches , as they began to build up. However after the old Shady Grove church had dissolved and the members had placed their letters in Reagan, and other churches, it was used for a picnic ground for many years.

"Organization of the Methodist church South, began in Falls county as early as 1849 , when that church had a missionary in the field. This was before the county was organized. This pioneer missionary was Rev. DeVilbis. One of the first services after reaching the field was at the residence of Wm. Capps, a pioneer settler in this vicinity for whom one

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of the prominent streets of Marlin is named. Our community for some time was the base of operation throughout this section and this missionary was the first to represent the Methodist church in this field. I will give you the following brief history of the [??] Reagan Methodist church as collected by Mr Zeb Burke and Mr Henry Kelley of Reagan.

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"The Methodist Church at Reagan, Texas, was first organized through the efforts of Rev. Theodore Gillette, a preacher living at that time in Bee County, Texas. The founding of a church at Reagan was the result of a visit made Rev. Gillette to his sister, the late Mrs. H.E. Johnson and while here on the visit conferred with several of the Methodist families then residing in or near Reagan. These families included the Marlin, Adams, Covington, and other families. As a result of these conferences, it was decided that to establish a church to serve this community, and it was further decided that a location be selected which in later years became widely known as Shady Grove, which is located some three and one half miles east of the present town of Reagan.

"The first pastor of the newly founded church was Rev. Howell Taylor in the year of 1872; and he was followed in turn J. J. Davis in 1873, and W. T. Melugin 1874-1875, Frank Compton in 1876, S. S. Scott 1877, M.M. Glass in 1878, B. F. Gassaway[?] 1879-1880, J. P. Musset in 1881, C. S. Weaver in 1882, H. T. Hart in 1883.

"It was during the ministry of Rev. Hart that the trustees of the church at Shady Grove, led by Uncle Newt Crouch as Chairman of the Board, in August 1883, purchased three town lots in the town of Reagan from the Houston and Texas Central Railroad Company at \$105.00, and erected thereon the first Methodist Church in the town of Reagan proper. This church was built under contract by W. A. McClarty of Wooten Wells, Texas, and was painted by Mr. Charlie Elgin, a resident of Reagan at that time. This section caused a consolidation which gradually led to the abandonment of the Shady Grove site, but that location was used for several years afterwards as the place of many famous camp meetings which were popular in that period.

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"The pastor at the time the church was built was Rev. T. F. Dimmitt who came to Reagan in 1884 and stayed here as pastor three years. He was followed by F. L. Allen in 1887, G.C. STovall in 1888, W. Wooten in 1889, O. T. Hotchkiss 1890, J. M. Armstrong 1891, J. B. Cochran 1892, 1893, and 1894.

"The Sunday School was immediately organized in the new church with Bro. Jim Hays as first superintendent; Bro. Hays was followed in this connection successively by H. A. Carlton and Brother C. Ward.

"On Sept. 27, 1892, two small boys, one a white boy by the name of Carpenter and the other a negro boy by the name of Dan Channey having found a nest of pigeon eggs and accordingly decided to have a feast and went into the church and obtained a can of kerosene oil kept in the building as fuel for lights and to build fires in the stove, and poured the oil on the floor and started a fire for their eggs. The result was the loss of the Carpenter boy's dog, the feast of roast pigeon eggs and the church building on which there was no insurance.

"The pastor at the time of the fire was Rev. J. B. Cochran, and work of raising funds to build a new church was immediately started. The pastor made a list of the membership of the Church and assessed each 5 member his part to meet the expenses of the new building and it is recorded that every member responded to the assessment, many at considerable sacrifice to themselves and paid their part toward the new church. It is related in this connection that Brother M. W. Cabaniss sold his fine saddle horse to raise his part and that Brother A. M. Anderson sold one of his best mules to meet his assessment. Both of these men are still in Reagan to recall the loyalty of the membership on this occasion. There were doubtless other cases where extreme sacrifice was made to raise the amount needed.

"The new church built to replace the burned one, was located on the present site, a gift of Grandma Tennessee Rogers, and a building was erected there and it is in that building

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that we meet today to celebrate the 45th. anniversary of the first services held in this building. The date was March 12, 1893. On this Sunday School was conducted by the Superintendent, C. Ward, and the opening song number 878 in the old Hymnal. All officers were present and all teachers were present with the exception of Isaac Crouch, teacher class Number 2.

"The first officials of the church were as follows: Rev. J. B. Cochran, Pastor in Charge, Bro. C. Ward, Superintendent of the Sunday School and Steward, N. A. Carlton, Librarian, I. N. Crouch, R. O. Adams, W. H. C. Scheibagen, Henry W. Ward, J. T. Pruett, S. H. Robertson, and A. M. Anderson were stewards. The trustees of the church were I. N. Crouch, R. P. O. Adams, and T. J. Pruett.

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"The following were the teachers of the Sunday School classes, W. H. C. Scheibagen, Mrs. Bettie Rogers, Isaac Crouch, Mrs. M. E. Crouch, Mrs Frank Carlton, and Mrs. Julia Anderson.

"At the first Sunday School services there were thirty-five scholars present, thirty-two being absent. The Scripture Lesson was Esther the 4th. Chapter, verses 10-17; and 5:1-3. The subject of the lesson was "Esther Before the King." The offering for the Sunday School on this Sunday was \$1.55. On the Sunday School roll at the time of this first service and still active and enrolled today were the following people, Mrs. H. W. Ward, Mrs. E. R. Boyles, Mrs. Leona Burke, Mrs. A. M. Anderson, Mr. Dave Ward, and Mr. Luther Ward. There are also eight others who still live in Reagan who were on this Sunday School roll in 1893 at this first service, but who, because the infirmities of age or loss of health, are not at present in regular attendance.

"In further connection with the building of the new church, it is related that the bell in the new church building,, the same one now in use was hung by M. W. Cabaniss, W. B. DeWalt, Tom Rogers, Isaac Crouch and J. B. Cochran, the pastor. In hanging the bell, this

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group enclosed themselves inside the steeple and were forced to crawl through the lattice work to reach the ground. When the bell had been hung, the pastor, Rev. Cochran, asked that whomever of the group that were living when he should die, should toll the bell in his memory. The only living member of the group to survive him, was M. W. 7 Cabiness, who not hearing of the death of Rev. Cochran for a considerable period of time, was not able to carry out his wish.

“Church and conference records reveal that at the time of building this church there were on this charge, which included Bremond and Wooten Wells, 369 members, during the year 1893, 24 were added on profession of faith, 7 by certificate and 13 were removed by death and otherwise. 17 infants were baptized, and 9 adults were baptized this first year. The financial accomplishments of the charge during this first year were as follows: Pastors salary \$700.00, presiding elder \$100.00, bishop \$13.00, conference collection \$56.00, Foreign Missions \$87.50, Domestic Missions \$49.35, Church Extension \$30.00, Education \$21.00, Delegate to General Conference \$8.00, District Parsonage \$12.00, and for printing and conference minutes \$5.00—a total for the year of \$1083.10.

“Since that time the following men have become preachers from this church, Jim Adams, Bob Adams, Cal. Adams, A. T. Walker, and A. J. [Malloway?], all of these have rendered notable services to the church and to the Cause of Christianity in the world and each were devoted followers of the Lowly Nazarene and were faithful shepherds of their flocks as they went about doing good. Two of them are still active in the ministry, Rev. A. T. Walker and Rev. Bob Adams. (Two of these men were my brothers and one an uncle).

“Brother and Mrs. Newt. Crouch beautifully endowed the church with a sum of money amounting to \$2,000.00, stipulating that the sum should remain a trust fund, the interest being spent under the direction of the 8 Trustees in furthering the cause of the Reagan Methodist Church.

“The ministers following Rev. Cochran as pastors of the Reagan Church are as follows:

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G. H. Phair————-1896-1896

J. W. Harmon————-1897-98-99

T. S. Williford————-1900

G. E. Collins————-1901-02

S. F. Chambers————-1903

J.W. Threadwell————-1904

A. A. Wagnon————-1905-06

A. T. Walker————-1907-08

T.M. Brownlee————-1909

J. W. Goodwin————-1910

Jesse Willis————-1911

Weems Wooten————-1912

J.E. Payne————-1913

W. A. Craven————-1914-15

O. F. Zimmerman————-1916-17

T. C. Sharp————-1918-19

D. S. Hotchkiss————-1920-21

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H. G. Ryan—————1922-1923

W. J. Brient—————1924-25

L. C. Lilly—————1926-27-28

C. T. Cummings—————1928-29-30

S. H. Innis—————1931-32

W. G. Hughes—————1933-35

C. E. Hull—————1936

C. A. West—————1937

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“Those who served as Sunday School superintendents since 1893 following Bro. C. Ward are J. M. Neal, H. E. Moore, R. L. Perdue, S. O. Love, H. E. Kelley, O. L. Moore, H. E. Moore, and W. H. Earles.

“Concluding a brief summary of the history of the Reagan Methodist Church, we find that it has served the purpose a true Church of God should serve; it has administered to the spiritual needs of an ever changing populace, been a bulwark for better educational facilities, a guarantor of freedom of worship, and a true messenger of the Gospel according as God Would have it do.

“It remains today a monument to a sturdy pioneer people who sacrificed and gave of their all that it might live; it has been handed down from generation to generation and each in turn has proved worthy of his heritage. It therefore remains to the present and coming

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generations to further outline the progress it shall make and may they , like their forebear
forebearer's , prove as worthy of the trust that will be entrusted to them.”